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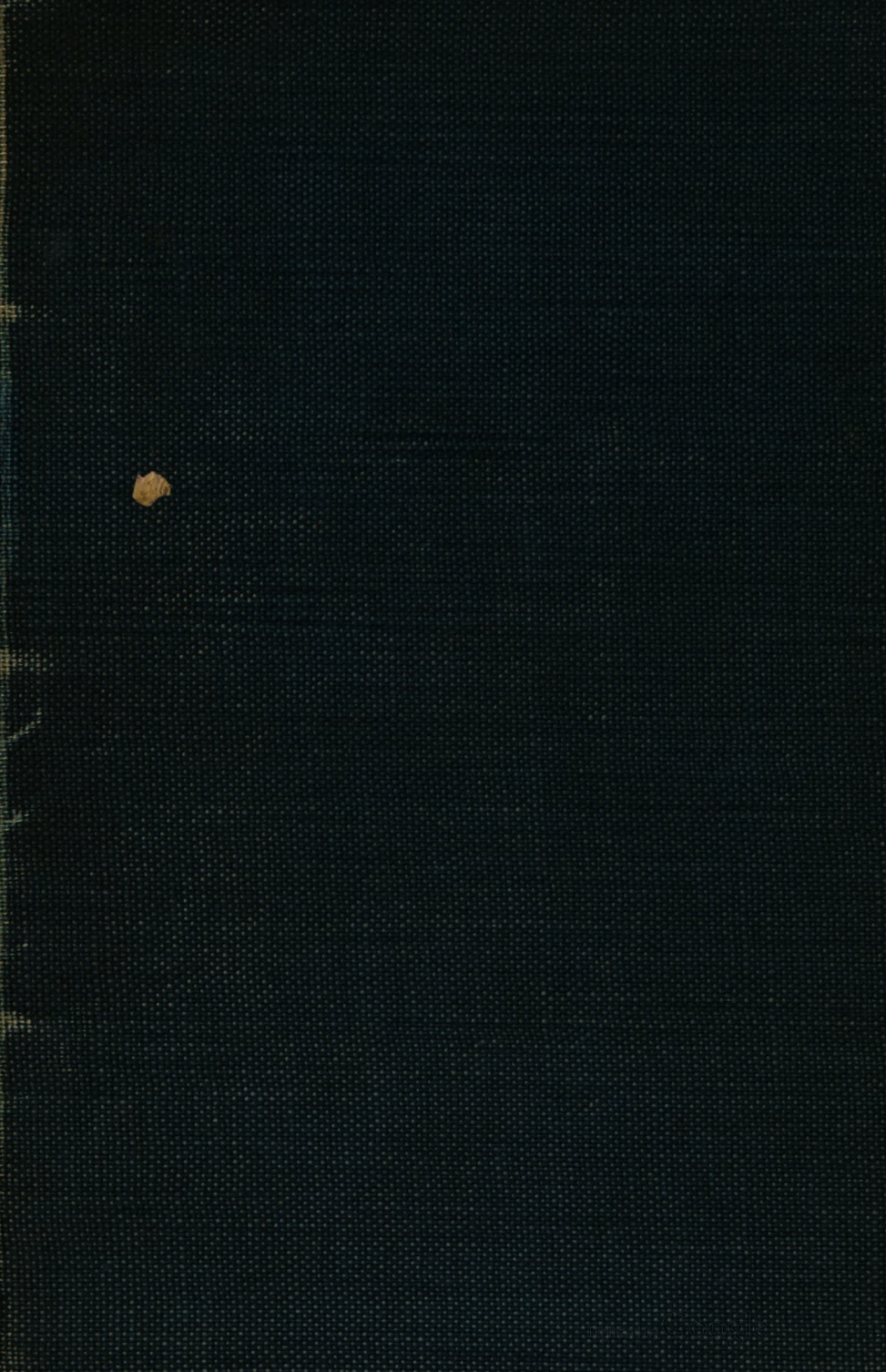
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FROM

SOUVENIRS OF COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY

“JETONS L'ŒUVRE À LA MER!”

(LA MER DES MULTITUDES)

1899

Washington

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FIRST IMPRESSION.
DECEMBER,
1899.

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DEDICATED
TO
AN ENTIRE FAMILY
IN
HEAVEN
AND
ON
EARTH.

PREFACE.

“C’EST LÀ UNE ŒUVRE DIVINE A FAIRE.”

An officer of the Garde-Royale, Alfred-Victor, Comte de Vigny, recorded these Souvenirs after the Revolution of 1830, after twenty years acquaintance with the highest military service.

In literature he then became the personification of that Passive Grandeur he so highly and so justly honored; in marked contrast to the Active Grandeur of the world-renowned Victor Hugo.

Above all men, Victor Hugo recognized the worth of de Vigny; towards the close of the reign of Louis Philippe, his friendship and

firmness made de Vigny a member of the French Academy ; and he would have made him Director or Chancellor of the Academy, so highly did he appreciate the silent grandeur of this man. When he was himself proposed as Director, Hugo declined the honor, saying : " So long as the Academy chooses to keep one of its members 'in the corner' I will keep company with that member."

Not only Victor Hugo, but Lamartine, though much older, and Alfred de Musset looked upon de Vigny as

" L'IDEAL du poète et des graves penseurs."

" His nobility of thought, winnowed as wheat and refined as purest gold, saves him from the reproach, which has been unjustly thought to rest, upon the technically perfect work of Theophile Gautier."

In our own day, we have seen Ernest Renan, envying the future historian of the Genius of Greece, almost regretting his "Nazarite's vow ;" and we contemplate the "Tour d'Ivoire" of Victor de Vigny :

“He will have for his recompense the greatest joy which man can taste; that of following up the evolution of Life in the very centre of the divine egg, within which, life—the life of Honor—first began to palpitate.”

De Vigny himself says, in the greatest of his works :

“NO ONE CAN HASTEN TOO RAPIDLY THE TIME WHEN ARMIES SHALL BE IDENTIFIED WITH NATIONS, IF THE NATIONS DESIRE TO FORWARD THE DAY WHEN ARMIES SHALL BE NO MORE, WHEN UNANIMITY OF SOCIAL FORMS SHALL MAKE THE NATIONS OF THE GLOBE, ONE.”

To nationalize the first of modern armies, even the invincible genius of Von Moltke found necessary, to convince the opposing nation, three decisive wars: that of 1864, (following immediately the death of de Vigny), the war which lost to Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein; that of 1866, which lost, to Austria, the control of Germany; and that of 1870, which lost to France, the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

The French Republic, born in anguish, with

great loss of blood, territory and treasure, having accomplished the identification of the army and the nation, publishes, since 1882, de Vigny's Souvenirs.

May "UNANIMITY OF SOCIAL FORMS" spread now more rapidly; may nations recognize de Vigny's efforts; for he kept alive the dimmed, yet sacred flame, within the "devastated Temple," before which stood the altar to "the unknown God;" may the splendor of ETERNAL TRUTH soon fill the re-raised "Tent of David" with His Glory.

"For from ruins like these, rise the fables
that shall last;
And to build up the future, Heaven shatters
the past."

Lord Lytton.

"MANY TEMPLES CRUMBLE, BUT HIS IMAGE
DOES NOT TREMBLE."

Comte de Vigny.

THE CASTLE

(LE CHASTE NAO)

IMPERIAL GRANDEUR

OR

THE FAMILY

FROM

SOUVENIRS OF COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY

“JETONS L'ŒUVRE À LA MER!”

(LA MER, DES MULTITUDES)

Vol. III

DECEMBER

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Grati,

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER FIRST

RESPONSIBILITY

Should military responsibility cause one to commit a crime?

During the epoch of The Terror a captain of vessel received, as did all captains in the navy, the monstrous order of the Committee of Public Safety to put to death all prisoners of war ; and this captain had the misfortune to take an English vessel, and the still greater misfortune to obey the order of the Government. Returning to the land, he reported his shameful obedience and retired from the service, dying of chagrin soon after. That captain was in

command of *la Boudeuse*, the frigate that was the first vessel of our fleet to circumnavigate the globe, when commanded by my kinsman M. de Bougainville. I have seen that grand navigator weep for the honor of his vessel; and I felt myself humiliated to find in my hand the sabre of a slave (un sabre d'esclave) instead of a noble's sword (une épée de chevalier).

Slowly was I cured of that malady military enthusiasm; slowly faded before my eyes all the brilliancy of that noble caste that I would have wished consecrated solely to the defense of LA PATRIA.

Will there never come a law that will put in accord Duty and Conscience?

Was the disobedience of the Vi comte d'Orte wrong, when he replied to Charles IX who had ordered him to extend to Dax the Parisian Saint-Bartholomew:

—Sire, I have communicated the command of Your Majesty to the faithful inhabitants and men of war; I have found only good citizens and brave soldiers; not one butcher.

And if he were right in refusing to obey, how are we to live under a law that decrees death to him who counts himself superior to BLIND OBEDIENCE? Such an absurdity cannot reign forever—it will be necessary one day to come out from under such a law.

I do not dissimulate: this is a question touching the very basis of all discipline. Far from wishing to weaken obedience and discipline, I think they are in need of being strengthened, among us, at many points; that, in the presence of the real enemy, the army should present, as one man, its breast plate of LIGHT; but when it turns its eyes inward, towards LA MÈRE-PATRIE, it should then behold far-seeing laws and recognize the higher duty of HER OFFSPRING.

Also, it is to be desired that immutable limits be fixed, once for all, to the absolute orders that may be given an army by the Sovereign-Power, which may often fall into unworthy hands; that it may not be possible for mere adventurers to attain DICTATORSHIP, transforming into assassins

hundreds of thousands of men, by a law that endures, like their reign, but a day.

The open, noble, freedom from care, so noticeable in men of war, is due, I think, to the discipline of obedience relieving them of responsibility. I was very young myself when I began to feel the effect of this upon my conscience, for it was not an enlightened, but a blind obedience, that caused me to see in each General-in-Chief a sort of Moses, who alone had to render his terrible account with the God; and who had all necessary authority to say, as to the sons of Levi: "Go through the camp; let each one slay his brother, his son, his friend and whoever is most dear to him!" And, FOR MAKING GODS OF GOLD, there were three thousand slain, it is said in the Book of Exodus (Ch. XXXII—v. 27-31); for I knew my Bible by heart, and that Book and I were inseparable, in camp or on the march. One can see how blindly I applied its teachings; though truly, in my heart, I felt things would be very bad with me and mine, before my gold-laced Moses would command my

family to be slain ; and I very wisely foresaw that no such order would be given. Nevertheless, in my resignation to a PASSIVE OBEDIENCE, I felt that I had surrendered my responsibility ; and I began to consider to what SOURCE this PASSIVE OBEDIENCE would cause me to ascend, seeing that OBEDIENCE seemed the basis of all social order ; by what reasonings could I solve its mysteries ; for though it seemed admirably adapted for its purposes, *in regard to the feet* ; when *applied to the head*, it seemed absurd.

I have since seen many *superior officers* reason the same way ; I was myself, at that time, but *a Levite sixteen years of age*. I did not, at that time, comprehend *la patrie entière de notre France* ; nor that other PATRIA that encircles her, all Europe ; nor the GREAT PATRIA of humanity, the globe ; which, happily, becomes each day yet smaller, in the hand of the Great Sovereign Power, CIVILIZATION.

I did not dream, at that time, how much lighter would become the heart of the man of war, if, though mute within the camp, his voice

was heard within the city; if he were but the executioner in the one, of the laws eternally existing for the welfare of the other; if, to conceal the blood upon the sword, the toga, as a robe of righteousness, was worn within the city.

Now it is not impossible that all this may come to pass one day.

And, truly, we are without pity when we would count one man so strong as to be alone responsible for the armed nation that we place within his hand. No, I can bear testimony that the conscience of each man revolts, when he sees the flow of human blood; one head is not sufficient to bear the heavy burden of so many murders; it would not be too many were there as many heads as there are combatants. To be true to their responsibilities under the law of blood they execute, it would be but just that they at least well comprehend that law.

But when the actual organization of the army is but an electric chain of blind obedience, suspended from a single finger, it can only too easily, at any given time, overturn completely

the very State itself. Such a revolution, but half formed, but half recruited, has only to gain a Minister of War to become at once complete. All the rest would follow of necessity, under ministerial law, without a single link of that electric chain being able to clear itself from the commotion that has been started from above.

War and armies are for the present, only, not forever. The earth will not always thirst for blood; *when the blood itself has ceased to cry for vengeance*; for they even who shed it, have of blood a secret horror. The earth of itself cries out to Heaven only that the God may send it rivers of fresh water, refreshing showers from His messengers the clouds, and the pure dew drops sparkling in the dawn. (Deut. XXXII). War is a curse from God and from man also. (II Samuel XXIV-14).

Sooner or later this idea must come to the light and take form. It will be demanded: "Is there no country where the men of war and the men of peace are one? Is there no country where the man of war is not a separate being

from the man of the family ; where he is not placed in the position of the family's worst enemy ? ” It is probable that, at present, the Powers are too much interested in surrounding themselves with gladiators, ready for the contest with which, without ceasing, we are menaced, to consent to put into execution the proper organization of the armies of nations, or *even to permit the proper organization to be known.*

It was not in my early youth, so given up to action, that I examined, for myself, what the ancients can teach us on this subject. Nevertheless the army such as it is, is a good book to open to become acquainted with humanity ; in it we find ourselves in touch with that which is lowest and with that which is highest ; the most refined, the very richest, are forced to see poverty living beside them, and to live with her ; with her, to measure the ration of coarse bread and weigh the meat. Were it not for the army, what son of a great lord would ever imagine how a soldier lives the year round, and grows fat, on nine sous a day and a pitcher of fresh water,

carrying on his back a knapsack that, with all it contains, costs his country only forty francs?

The regiments are convents for young men, but nomad convents; everywhere they carry with them their customs, stamped with gravity, self-restraint, and silence. Their simplicity of customs, the careless, joyous poverty of so many young men, their vigorous, healthy existence, without false politeness or false sensibility, the uniformity of sentiment imprinted upon them by their discipline, fill these convents with the vows of Poverty and Obedience. Never, without a throbbing heart, do I see the uniform of a regiment of the Guard.

By means of the sentiment of exalted personal dignity, what noble sentiments can be exalted and preserved! I have in my memory many examples; I have around me, ready to furnish me others, numberless intimate friends, content, even gayly resigned to their submission, obedience and freedom from care, in that liberty of the spirit in the midst of the very slavery of their corps, which recalls to my mind the horses beneath

them, measuring nobly their freedom within the limits of a bridle and a spur, proud of being responsible for nothing, *and the perfect calm of the spirit of the soldier and officer controlling.*

May I be permitted, therefore, to give a beautiful example of this perfect calm of the military life, in the simple history of the family of a soldier.

THE CASTLE

1

CHAPTER SECOND

A SOLDIER'S SCRUPLES OF HONOR

One summer evening, in 1819, with Timoléon d'Arc ---, like myself a lieutenant of the Guard, I was walking in the interior of the fortress at Vincennes, where we were in garrison. We had taken part in the ricochet firing, and were walking, according to our custom, in the polygon, listening to each other and talking, peacefully, of the history of war; discussing the organization of the Polytechnic School, its usefulness and its defects; considering especially the fallow looking men the soil of geometry produces. The pale color of the school had not as yet been bronzed

upon the forehead of Timoléon ; they, who knew him, will recall with me his graceful figure, though so thin ; his great black eyes and the beautifully arched eyebrows over them ; and how sweet and rarely troubled was the serious look on his Spartan-like face. That evening he was very preoccupied. I remember that he had under his arm a book : Laplace. And we spoke of the system of probabilities, over which Timoléon was often tormented.

The night descended ; or, rather, it seemed to spread itself around us : a beautiful night in August. With what pleasure I turned my eyes toward the castle chapel, built by the orders of Saint Louis ; and considered that crown of moss-grown towers, half ruined, which still ornamented Vincennes ; my eyes resting on the great donjon, standing in the midst, like a king surrounded by his guard. The chapel crescents were shining, in the midst of the first western stars, at the tips of the tall pinnacle spires. The perfume of the forest came to us over the ramparts, and the grassy mounds of the batteries began to breathe

the breath of that summer night. We seated ourselves on one of the great cannon of Louis XIV; and, in silence, we watched some young soldiers testing their strength, holding a shell at arm's length; others were slowly entering the castle; crossing—by twos and by fours—the drawbridge, with all the laziness of the military-off-duty. Within the castle, the court-yard was filled with field artillery, the caissons charged with powder, ready for the review the next morning. Beside us, near the Forest Gate, an old adjutant of artillery was closing and re-opening, with noticeable uneasiness, the very small door of a little tower, used as the magazine for the foot artillery, and full of barrels of powder, small arms and munitions of war. In passing, he saluted. He was a man very tall, though a little bent. His hair was white, his moustache grey and very heavy; his manner was open, and he appeared still fresh and robust, as though he had lived to a happy, sweet and wise old age. He held three great registers in his hands and appeared to have been verifying the long columns of figures. We

asked him why he was working so late, contrary to his custom. He replied, with the tone of calm respect of the old soldiers, that the next day was a day of general inspection, at five in the morning; that he was responsible for the contents of the little magazine, and that he had not finished comparing the figures of his accounts, though he had been over the figures twenty times, that he might not be reproached for negligence; that he had to work while the day-light lasted, because the orders were very severe and forbade one entering at night the powder magazines with a light; even with a closed lantern; that he was very sorry he had not had time to see everything, that there were yet the shells to be examined; and he gave a look of impatience at the grenadier who had just been placed on guard at the door, to prevent any one from entering.

After he had given us these details, the adjutant went once more to the door and kneeled at the threshold, to see if any powder had been spilled. He feared lest the spurs or iron heels

of the officers' boots might, at inspection, set fire to a train.

—There is none there, said he, rising ; but it is in regard to my records I am most concerned ; and he looked again at the magazine, with regret.

—You are too scrupulous, said Timoléon.

—Ah ! mon lieutenant, when one is in the Guard he cannot be too much on his honor. Rather than be placed in the guard house, one of our quarter-masters blew his brains out last Monday. I should be, also, an example to the under officers. During all my service in the Guard, my chiefs have never reproached me ; to receive punishment would cause me great unhappiness.

It is true that these brave soldiers, chosen from the army to serve among the élite of the élite, believe themselves dishonored by the slightest fault.

—Come, you are all Puritans of Honor, said I to him, as I tapped him on the shoulder.

He again saluted and retired to his quarters ; but he soon returned, according to an innocent custom, which pertains to an honest race of soldiers, bringing in the hollow of his hands some hempseed for the hen that was raising her twelve chicks under the old bronze cannon where we were seated.

It was certainly the most charming hen that I had ever known in my life ; she was entirely white, without a single spot ; and this brave man, with his great fingers, mutilated at Marengo and at Austerlitz, had glued to her head a little red plume, and around her neck a little silver collar with a badge bearing her monogram. The good hen appeared to be proud and grateful. She knew that the sentinels caused her to be respected, and she feared no one, not even a little sucking pig and an owl, quartered near her—under the next cannon. “La Belle Poule” was the joy of the gunners ; she would receive from all of us the crumbled bread and sugar, so long as we were in uniform ; but she had a horror for the clothing of the bourgeois ; and, not even recog-

nizing us in that disguise, she would flee with her family under the cannon of Louis XIV. A magnificent cannon, upon which was engraved the eternal sun, with the king's *Nec pluribus impar*, and *Ultima ratio Regum*. And *a hen with her chicks found protection beneath it!*

The good adjutant spoke her praise in the strongest terms. She furnished eggs for himself and daughter with unparalleled generosity ; and he loved her so, in return, that he had never had the courage to kill a single one of the poulets, for fear of afflicting her.

As he was telling us her good habits, the drums and trumpets began to beat and to sound together the evening call. They prepared to raise the draw bridges, and the chains began to rattle. We were not on duty, so we went out from the castle through the Forest Gate. Timoléon, who had not ceased marking angles in the sand, with the end of his sword scabbard, had risen from the cannon with regret, regretting his triangles ; while I regretted my white hen and my adjutant.

We turned to the left, following the ramparts ; and, passing thus the grassy mound raised to the duc d'Enghien, over his body shot and his head crushed in with a paving stone ; we kept along the edge of the castle moat, looking into it ; with our eyes regarding the little white path that he had taken to lead him to that grave.

There are two kinds of men who can very well walk together five hours continuously without speaking a word : they are prisoners and officers. Compelled to see each other always, even when they are together, each one is alone. We walked along in silence, our arms behind our backs.

I noticed, in the moonlight, that Timoléon turned over and over, without ceasing, a letter that he held in his hands ; it was in form, a small slender letter ; and I recognized in it, the figure of its feminine author ; for I was accustomed to see him dream the day long over that little hand writing, so fine and elegant.

Thus we had arrived at the village facing the castle ; we had reached the top of the stairs in

our little white home ; we were about to separate in the square hall-way to go to our apartments, for we slept in adjoining rooms, and we had not spoken a word. Only there, he said to me, suddenly :

—She wishes absolutely that I send in my resignation ; what do you think of it ?

—I think, said I, that she is as beautiful as an angel, because I too have seen her ; I think that you love her like a fool, for I have seen you now for two years such as you are this evening ; I think you have an ample fortune, judging from the horses that you own ; I think you have received sufficient training in the service to retire, and that in time of peace it will be no great sacrifice ; but I think also of one other thing ----

—What is that, said he smiling bitterly, for he divined it.

—It is that she has married, said I more gravely ; you know it better than I do, mon pauvre ami.

—That is true, said he, she has no future.

—And the service would enable you to forget this sometime, I added.

—Perhaps, said he; but it is not probable that my star will change in the army. I have noticed in my life that I have never done a good deed without its being interpreted an evil one.

—You may read Laplace all night, said I, but you will find no remedy for that.

And I shut myself up in my own room to write a poem on the Iron Mask, a poem that I called: THE PRISON.

THE CASTLE

II

CHAPTER THIRD

THE LOVE OF DANGER

The isolation cannot be too complete for the men that I do not know what demon pursues with the illusions of poetry. The silence was profound, and the shadow heavy beside the towers of old Vincennes. The garrison had been sleeping since nine o'clock in the evening. All fires had been put out at six, at the sound of the drums. One could hear only the voices of the sentinels, stationed on the ramparts, sending the rounds and repeating, one after another, their long and melancholy cry: "Sentinelle prenez garde à vous!" The ravens, on the towers, would

reply more sadly still ; and, no longer believing themselves in safety there, they would fly still higher to the donjon. Nothing should have longer troubled me, and nevertheless something did trouble me, which was neither noise nor light. I wished to write and could not write. I felt something mar my thought like a speck in an emerald ; it was the thought that someone near me was also watching and watching without consolation, deeply tormented. That made me ill-at-ease. I felt sure that he was in need of confiding in me, and I had fled brusquely from his confidence, with the desire to give myself up to my own favorite ideas, and I found myself being punished for it by being myself tormented by my own ideas. They no longer bore me freely through the air ; it seemed to me that their wings were heavy, dampened perhaps by the secret tear of a forsaken friend.

I rose from my easy chair. I opened the window, and I began to breathe the air perfumed by the night. The odor of the forest came to

me, filling the air above the castle; and, from the castle, the faint odor of powder ; that recalled to me the volcano over which were living and sleeping three thousand men in perfect security. I perceived on the great barrack wall of the fortress, separated from the village by a roadway of forty paces at most, the light cast by the lamp of my young neighbor whose shadow passed and repassed on the opposite wall ; and I saw by his epaulettes that he had not even thought of going to bed. It was midnight. I hastened from my own bed chamber and entered his. He was not at all astonished to see me, and said he was still up because he wished to read some from Xenophon. But as he had not a single book open in his room, and the little letter was still in his hand, I was not deceived by his words. We went to the window ; and I said to him, striving to bring our ideas together :

—I was working also in my room ; I was trying to account for the magnetism that we find in the sword. It is an irresistible attraction, powerful enough to retain us in the service

in spite of ourselves, keeping us always waiting for some event or a war. I do not know (and I was thinking of speaking to you about it) if it would not be true to say and to write that there is in the profession of arms a passion peculiar to it and which gives to it its life ; a passion which has nothing to do with the love of glory, nor with ambition ; it is a sort of personal combat with destiny, a wrestling which is the source of a thousand delights, unknown to the rest of mankind, and of which the interior triumphs are full of magnificence ; finally that it is the LOVE OF DANGER.

—That is true, said Timoléon.

I continued :

—What else could it be that would sustain the mariner upon the sea ? What would console him in that ennui when a man sees only men ? He sails, and says adieu to land ; adieu to woman's smile, adieu to woman's love ; adieu to the choicest friendships and to the tenderest habits of our life, adieu to one's good old parents ; adieu to beautiful nature in the fields,

to the trees, to the green grass, to the flowers that seem so good, to the sombre rocks, to the melancholy woods full of silent savage animals; adieu to the great cities, to the ceaseless labor of the arts, to the sublime agitation of all thought in the very idleness of life, to the elegant, mysterious and passionate relations of society; he says adieu to all, and sails. He goes to seek three enemies: the water, the very air, and man; and every minute of his life is going to be occupied in combat. This magnificent uncertainty delivers him from ennui. He lives in a perpetual victory; it is one simply to cross the ocean and not be swallowed up by capsizing; it is one merely to go where he wishes to go and to force his way in the very arms of the contrary wind; it is one merely to scud before the tempest's might and to make it follow him like a valet-à-cheval; it is one merely to sleep upon its waves and to establish there his study. With some sentiment of royalty he reclines upon the back of the ocean, like Saint Gerome upon the lion's back; and Solitude becomes his Bride.

—That is grand, said Timoléon; and I noticed that he laid the letter on the table.

—And it is this LOVE OF DANGER that nourishes him, that causes him never to be a moment idle, for he feels that he is contending and he has an aim. We have need of this continual struggle; if we were in the field, you would not suffer so much.

—Who knows? said he.

—We should not go the road that you are going. The happiness you are seeking is not our proper aim.

—Too true! too true! I heard him murmur. And this continual lying!

—No one can change the fact; she has already married. Her first child has been borne. That would ever be a torment to you!

He grasped my hand. —Do you believe we are going to have war?

—I do not believe a word of it, I replied to him.

—If I only knew if she is at the ball tonight! I asked her not to go.

—I should perceive, without your saying that to me, that it is mid-night; you have no need of an Austerlitz, mon ami, you are completely occupied; you can continue your dissimulation and your lies several years yet. Good evening.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER FOURTH

A FAMILY CONCERT

As I was retiring, I stopped ; my hand touched the key of the door, as I listened in astonishment at music that seemed very near, though coming from the castle. As heard from the window, it appeared to us to be formed by the voices of two men, the voice of a woman and a piano. At that moment and at that hour of the night it was a sweet surprise to me.

I proposed to my comrade to go nearer to hear it. The little drawbridge, beside the great one, for the use of the governor and the officers, during a portion of the night, was still lowered. We

ente red the fortress, and were guided through the courtyards of the castle, by the music, to the open windows that I recognized as those of the good old Adjutant of artillery.

They were the large windows on the ground floor ; and, stopping directly in front of them, we could see, at the farther end of the room, the simple family of that honest soldier.

Against the farther wall of the room, stood a little mahogany piano, decorated with old fashioned ornaments of polished copper. The Adjutant (so old yet so modest, as he had appeared to us from the first) was seated before the keyboard, playing a series of chords, as an accompaniment of simple modulations, but very harmoniously combined. He had his eyes raised towards the heavens, and there was no music on the instrument before him, his mouth was half-open with delight, under his heavy long white moustache. His daughter, standing beside him at his right hand, had paused in her singing, for she was regarding him with uneasiness, her mouth also half-open, like his. At his left hand stood a

young under-officer of the light artillery of the Guard, in the severe uniform of his fine corps, looking into the face of the young girl as though he had not ceased to listen.

Nothing could be more peaceful than their poses, nothing could be more becoming than their deportment, nothing could be more beautiful than their faces. The light that shone from above, on these three faces, did not show one line of worldly care; the finger of the God had written there only goodness, love and modesty.

The striking of our swords against the masonry warned them we were there. The brave old man arose and saw us, and his bronzed forehead flushed with surprise and, I think also, with satisfaction. He hastened to take one of the three candles lighting the room, and came to open the door that we might enter and sit down. We begged him to continue his family concert; and, with a noble simplicity, without excusing himself

and without demanding indulgence, he said to his children:

—Where were we?

And the three voices rose in chorus with an unspeakable harmony.

Timoléon listened without a movement. As to myself, hiding my head and my eyes, I began to dream with my heart filling with pity; why, I do not know; it made me very sad. What they were singing carried my spirit into the regions of tears and of melancholy joys; and, pursued perhaps by the importuning ideas of my own evening work, I changed into mobile images the mobile modulations of the voices. What they were singing was one of those Scotch choruses, one of the ancient melodies of the bards, that the sonorous echo of the Orkneys still sings. To me, the melancholly chorus rose slowly and vanished continually like the mists of the mountains of Ossian; these mists which form from the sparkling spray of the torrents of Arven, slowly massed, swelling and solidifying, as they rose, forming a crowd of innumerable phantoms, swaying and

circling in the winds. They were phantoms of warriors, always dreaming, helmet in hand, their tears and their blood falling, drop by drop, into the dark waters beside the rocks; they were pale beauties, with the hair streaming behind like the distant comet, and dissolving into the misty bosom of the moon: they pass quickly, and their feet vanish, enveloped in the vaporous folds of their white robes; they have no wings, yet they fly. They float by, holding harps; they float by with eyes lowered and the lips parted in innocence; they cry out in passing; and, rising, they disappear in the soft light that called them into form. There, are etherial ships, that seem to be dashed against the sombre shores, as they plunge in the heavy waves; the mountainous cliffs seem to bow their foreheads as they weep, and the black clouds lift their deformed heads from which the wind howls, as they regard the trembling disk in the heavens; while the seas shake the white columns of the Orkneys, arranged like the pipes of an immense organ; and there spreads over the ocean a harmony rent into fragments

and a thousand times prolonged in the caverns in which the waves become entrapped.

Young as I was, open to all sympathies, as though in love with these fictitious sorrows, the music translated itself to my spirit thus, in sombre images.

This was to return to the thought of him who had invented songs so sad and powerful, and to feel them in the same manner. Even the happy family felt the strong emotion proceeding from the song, the profound vibration causing, at times, the voices as they sang to tremble.

The song ceased, and a long silence followed. The young girl, as though fatigued, was leaning on the shoulder of her father; she was tall, but stooped a little in her carriage, as though from weakness; she was very slight and appeared to have grown too rapidly, and her chest to have become affected. She kissed the bronzed forehead, so large and so wrinkled, of her father, and abandoned her hand to the young sub-officer who pressed it to his lips.

As I was very guarded, by my pride, from avowing aloud my interior reveries, I contented myself with saying coldly :

—May the heavens accord long life and every blessing to the ones who have the gift to translate literally music! I cannot too much admire the man who finds in a symphony the fault of being too Cartesian, and who speaks of another as inclined towards the system of Spinoza; who expresses surprise at the pantheism of a trio, and who speaks of the utility of an overture in the amelioration of the class that is most numerous. If I were so happy as to know why a flat added to the clef would be able to render a quartette of flutes and bassoons more partisan towards a Directory than towards a Consulate or towards an Empire, I would speak no more, I would sing eternally; I would trample under my feet words and phrases, which are good, at the most, only for a hundred departments, whilst I would have the happiness of expressing my ideas more clearly to all the universe with my seven notes. But, destitute of this science as I am, I will only speak

to you of the satisfaction that it gives me, above all, to see you and a scene so full of accord, simplicity and uprightness as reigns in your family. And it pleases me most to see what pleasure you yourselves take in your little concert; *you are yourselves a harmony more beautiful than the sweetest music that the heavens themselves have ever heard ascending towards them from our earth that, in its misery, is forever groaning.*

I extended my hand with effusion to this good father, and he grasped it with an expression of grave gratitude. He was but an old soldier; but he had, in his language and in his manner, I do not know what of good society in the old times. What followed explained this to me.

—My Lieutenant, this is the life we lead, said he. We rest ourselves with singing, my daughter, myself and my future son-in-law.

At the same time he regarded these young people with a tenderness that was radiant with happiness.

—This, added he with an air more grave,

showing us a little portrait, is the mother of my daughter.

We looked at the white plaster wall of the modest room, and we saw there, in fact, a miniature representing the most gracious, freshest looking little peasant girl that ever Greuze had endowed with great blue eyes and lips like a cherry.

—It was a very great Lady who had formerly the goodness to make that portrait, said the Adjutant to me, and it is a very curious history that of the dower of my poor little wife.

And to our first prayers to tell us of his marriage, he spoke to us thus; first, very ceremoniously, filling and offering to us small glasses of green absinthe; and, around the three glasses, we seated ourselves.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER FIFTH

TV

THE HISTORY OF THE ADJUTANT THE CHILDREN OF MONTREUIL AND THE YOUNG STONE CUTTER

You should know, mon Lieutenant, that I was raised in the village of Montreuil by M. le Curé de Montreuil himself. He had me learn some notes of church music during the happiest days of my life: at the time, I was one of the children of the choir, when I had great, round rosy cheeks, that everyone wished to tap in passing; a voice clear, hair powdered white, a blouse and wooden shoes. I do not often look at myself in the glass, but I imagine that I scarcely resemble any longer such a one. Such a one I was, however, and I never could be

prevailed upon to leave a sort of harpsichord, very harsh and out of tune, that the old curé had at his house. I put it in tune with so just an ear, that the good father who had, formerly, been renowned at Notre-Dame for his singing and teaching the church music (*faux-bourdon*), had me learn an old solfège.

When he was pleased, he would pinch my cheeks till they were blue, and would say to me : —Remember, Mathurin, thou art only the son of a peasant, from a peasant mother ; but, if thou know well thy catechism and thy solfège, and have nothing to do with that rusty old gun at your house, one will be able to make of thee a master musician. *Va toujours!*—That would give me good courage, and I would pound with all my fingers the two poor rows of keys, for most of the sharps refused to sound.

There were hours when I had permission to run and play ; but to me the sweetest recreation was to go seat myself at the farther end of the park of Montreuil, and to eat my bread with the masons and the workmen who were building on

the avenue to Versailles, a hundred feet from the barriers, a little music pavilion, by order of the Queen.

It was a charming place : you can see it to the right hand of the road to Versailles, on reaching there ; at the very extremity of the park of Montreuil, in the midst of a grassy lawn, surrounded by grand trees ; if you notice a pavilion there, resembling a mosque and a bonbonnière, it is there that I used to go to watch them build.

I used to hold by the hand a little girl of my own age, who was called Pierrette, whom the curé used to have sing also because she had a beautiful voice. She used to carry a great slice of bread with butter and preserves on it that the curé's nurse used to give her, for her mother was the curé's nurse. And we would go together to watch them build the little music house that the Queen was having built as a present to Madame.

Pierrette and I were about thirteen years old. She was already so beautiful, that they would

stop her on the road to pay her compliments, and I have seen beautiful ladies descend from their carriages to speak with her and kiss her! When she wore a little red frock, with high pockets and closely gathered at her waist, one could well see how beautiful she would be one day. But she did not think of that and she loved me as her brother.

We always walked holding each the other's hand, from our earliest childhood; and we had become so accustomed to it that never in my life did I give her my arm. Our custom of going to see the workmen made us acquainted with a young stone cutter, eight or ten years older than ourselves. He would have us sit down on an unhewn stone or on the ground beside him; and, when he would have a great stone to saw, Pierrette would throw water on the saw, and I would take hold of the other end to help him; thus he was the best friend I had in the world. He was of a very peaceful character, very gentle, and sometimes a little gay, but not often. He had made a little song about

the stones that he was cutting, and about others that were harder than the heart of Pierrette, and he played a hundred ways in that fashion on the words Pierre, Pierrette, Pierrerie, Pierrier, Pierrot, and that would make us laugh most heartily, all three. He was a big fellow, still growing, very pale, very loose-jointed, with long arms and immense legs, and he sometimes had the air of not thinking of what he was doing. He liked his trade, he used to say, because he could earn his day's wages with an easy conscience, whilst thinking of something else until the sun went down. His father, an architect, had been so completely ruined, I do not know how, that it had become necessary for the son to begin life at the lowest round ; and, to this, he appeared to be very peacefully resigned. When he was cutting a great block or sawing it lengthwise, he would always begin a little song in which there would be a complete little story which he would build as his work progressed, making twenty or thirty couplets, more or less. Sometimes he would tell me to promenade

before him with Pierrette, and he would have us sing together, teaching each of us to sing a part ; then, he would amuse himself having me kneel before Pierrette, with her hand upon her heart ; and he composed the words of a little scene which he would have us repeat after him. All this did not hinder him from knowing well his work (*Son état*), for it was not a year before he became a master-mason. He had to feed, with his square and hammer, his poor mother and two little brothers who would come to watch him work with us. When he would see around him all this little company, it would give him courage and make him gay. We called him Michel ; but to tell you at once the truth, his name was Michel-Jean Sedaine.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER SIXTH

A SIGH

—Alas! said I, that was a poet in his proper place.

The young girl and the under-officer looked at each other, as though grieved to see their good father interrupted; but the worthy Adjutant smiled; adjusting higher, each side, the black cravat he wore, folded up with a white one, and tied in military fashion.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE LADY IN ROSE COLORED SILK

There is something that to me is certainly true, my dear children, said he, turning towards his daughter, that is that PROVIDENCE deigned to compose my life as it has been. Throughout the storms without number that have agitated it, I have never lacked faith in GOD, and I am able to say, in the face of all the world, that I have looked to him for succor and aided HIM with all my strength. Also, I can say to you, *that in walking on the stormy waves*, I have not merited to be called *a man of little faith*, as was the apostle; for when my feet would begin to

sink, I WOULD LOOK UPWARD AND I WOULD BE LIFTED UP.

(Here I looked at Timoléon. —He is worth more than we, said I very low.)—He continued:

—Monsieur le Curé de Montreuil loved me very much; I was treated by him with such paternal friendship, that I had entirely forgotten that I was born, as he never ceased reminding me, of a poor peasant and a poor peasant woman, who were carried off at almost the same time by the small pox, so that I had never known them. At sixteen years of age, I was a shy blockhead; but I knew a little latin, a great deal about music, and, in all kinds of work about the garden, they found me adroit enough. My life passed very smoothly and very happily, because Pierrette was there; even while I worked she was with me, though we did not say much to each other.

One day as I was chopping up the branches of a beech tree, in the park, just as I was tying up a little fagot, Pierrette said to me:

—Oh! Mathurin, I am afraid. See! there are

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two beautiful ladies coming straight towards us, at the other end of the path. What are we going to do ?

I looked, and, in fact, there were two young women walking very rapidly over the dry leaves, but not walking beside each other. One was a little taller than the other, dressed in a little robe of rose colored silk. She almost ran as she walked ; and the other, although she accompanied her, walked almost behind her. With the instinct of a wild animal I was seized with fright, poor little peasant that I was, and I said to Pierrette :

—Let us run !

But we had no time to escape, which only redoubled my fear, for the lady in rose made a sign to Pierrette, who became very red and dared not move, but grasped me quickly by the hand for strength. I myself took off my cap with my other hand and backed up against the tree, on the defensive.

When the lady in rose reached us, she came straight up to Pierrette, and, most familiarly,

took her by the chin to show her to the other lady, saying :

Eh! I told you: this would make my complete costume as a milkmaid, Thursday. —This is the pretty little girl! Mon enfant, thou wilt give all thy clothes, just as they are, to those who will come to demand them of thee for me; wilt thou not? I will send to thee mine own in exchange.

—Oh! Madame, said Pierrette drawing closer to me.

The other young lady smiled with an air so refined, so tender, so melancholly, that the touching expression on her face I shall never forget. She came forward with bowed head; and, touching gently the bare arm of Pierrette, she told her to come nearer, for every one must obey the wishes of that lady.

—Do not change in the least thy costume, ma belle petite, said the lady in rose, shaking a little reed cane mounted with gold, that she held in her hand. And *this great boy, he shall be a soldier; and you two shall be married.*

She was so beautiful, that I still remember how I was tempted to kneel before her; you may laugh as I often have since to myself; but, if you had seen her, you could understand what I mean. She had the air of a little fairy, very good.

She spoke quickly and with glee; and, giving Pierrette a little tap on the cheek, she left us standing there two speechless ninnyes, not knowing what to do; and we saw the two ladies follow the path towards Montreuil and disappear in the park behind the undergrowth.

Then we looked at each other; and, still holding each the other's hand we re-entered the house of Monsieur le Curé; we said nothing but we were very happy.

Pierrette was still blushing all over, and I was hanging my head. He asked us what we had been doing; I answered him with great seriousness:

—*Monsieur le Curé, I want to be a soldier.*

He almost fell backwards, he who had taught me the church music !

—How, mon cher enfant, said he to me, thou

canst wish to leave me! Ah! mon Dieu! Pierrette, what has happened to him, that he wishes to be a soldier? Dost thou no longer love Mathurin? Dost thou love Pierrette no longer? What hast happened to thee? What have we done to thee, tell me? And what art thou going to make of the beautiful education that I have given thee? Assuredly it has been time lost. But answer me, thou wicked fellow! thou reprobate! added he grasping me by the arm.

I shook my head, and answered him continually, looking only at my wooden shoes:

—I want to be a soldier.

The mother of Pierrette brought a great glass full of cold water to Monsieur le Curé, because he had become very red; and she began to cry.

Pierrette began to cry, also; but I had nothing to say. I knew she was not angry with me, because she knew very well that it was that I might marry her, I wished to go away.

At that moment, two great powdered lackeys entered with a femme de chambre who had the bearing of a lady; and they demanded if the little

one had prepared the bundle of clothes that the Queen and Madame la Princesse de Lamballe had demanded of her.

The poor curé arose so troubled that he could not continue standing a moment; and Pierrette and her mother trembled so that they dared not open the casket that had been brought to her in exchange for a child's frock and head gear; and they went to the little one's toilet a little like going to get ready to be shot.

Alone with me, the curé demanded what had happened, and I told him as I have been telling you, only a little more briefly.

—And it is for that that thou dost wish to go away, my son ? said he to me ; and, taking hold of both my hands : but do not dream that the greatest lady of all Europe has spoken thus to a little peasant like thee save for her own distraction ; she does not even remember what she said to thee. If one were to tell her you have taken her words as a command, or as thy horoscope, she would say thou art a simpleton, and that thou mayst be a gardener all thy life ; it will

be all the same to her. What thou canst earn in gardening and in teaching singing, shall belong to thee, mon ami; instead, what thou couldst earn in a regiment would not belong to thee, and thou wouldst have a thousand chances to squander everything in pleasures that are forbidden by Religion and Morality; thou wouldst lose all the good principles I have given thee, and thou wouldst force me to blush for thee. Thou wouldst return (if thou wouldst ever return) a different character from that which thou hast received at thy birth. Thou hast been gentle, modest, docile; thou wilt become rude, impudent, a blusterer. The little Pierrette will certainly not submit to be the wife of such a wicked, wicked wretch; and, her mother would prevent her marrying thee, should Pierrette still wish to do so; and, I, what could I do for thee, if thou shouldst forget entirely LA PROVIDENCE? See! thou wilt forget it; LA PROVIDENCE; I assure thee that will be thy end.

I remained with my eyes fixed on my wooden

shoes and my eyebrows knit; very mute; but, shaking my head, I answered him :

—C'est égal, je veux être soldat.

The good curé held on no longer; but opening wide the door, he showed me the broad roadway, with sadness.

I understood his pantomime, and I started. I would have done the same as he did, had I been in his place, assuredly. I think of this, at the present; but, that day, I did not think of it at all. I put my cotton cap over my right ear, I turned up the collar of my blouse; then, taking my stick, I went straight to a little tavern, on the avenue to Versailles, without saying adieu to any one.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER EIGHTH

THE POSITION OF THE FIRST RANK

In this little tavern, I found three brave fellows whose chapeaux were trimmed with gold lace, in white uniform lined with rose color; their moustaches waxed black and their hair powdered as white as hoar frost, they were talking as fast as quack-doctors. These three brave fellows were honest recruiting kid-nappers.

They said to me I had only to sit down at the table with them to have a just idea of the perfect happiness that one enjoyed eternally in their regiment, the Royal-Auvergne.

They had me eat of their chicken, their

venison and their partridges; and we drank, together, the wines of Bordeaux and Champagne; and excellent coffee; they, swearing to me on their honor, declared that, in the Royal-Auvergne, I would never have anything else to eat.

I saw very soon thereafter that they had told me the truth.

They swore to me, also, for they swore without end, that one enjoyed the sweetest liberty in the Royal-Auvergne; that, there, the soldiers were incomparably happier than the captains in other corps; that they enjoyed, there, the most agreeable society, not only of men but of most beautiful women; that they had plenty of music, and, above all, appreciated any one who played well upon the piano.

Their appreciation for the piano decided me.

The next day, then, I had the honor of being a soldier in the Royal-Auvergne. It was a fine enough corps, true enough; but I saw no more, neither Pierrette, nor Monsieur le Curé. I

asked for chicken at dinner, and they gave me to eat that agreeable mixture of potatoes, mouton and bread that was called, is called and no doubt will be called forever, *la ratatouille*.

They had me learn the position of a soldier without arms to a perfection so great, that I served as the model, afterwards, to the designer who made the plates for the manual of 1791; a manual which, as you know, *mon lieutenant*, is a *chef-d'œuvre* for precision.

I was taught, in the school of the CORPORAL'S SQUAD, how to load in twelve times, to load rapidly, and to load at will; counting or without counting the movements; and as perfectly as the stiffest of the corporals of the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great, whom the old Germans still remember with the tenderness of those who love the ones who flog them. They did me the honor to promise me that, if I carried myself well, I would finally be admitted into the first company of GRENADIERS. —I soon had a powdered queue hanging down over my white uniform, nobly; but I never saw any more Pierrette, nor her

mother, nor Monsieur le Curé de Montreuil; and I played no music.

One fine day, as I was on extra guard duty (in front of the very barracks we are now in), for having made three errors in the manual of arms, I was placed in the position of firing in the front rank, kneeling with one knee on the pavement, having in front of me a brilliant and superb sun, as a target, at which I was forced to aim and remain perfectly motionless, until my bent arms were so cramped the blood would cease to circulate; and I was encouraged to sustain my heavy musket by the presence of an honest corporal, who would, from time to time, raise the end of my bayonet with the butt-end (crosse) of his piece, when my own would droop; that was a little punishment invented by Monsieur de Saint Germain.

I had been about twenty minutes applying myself to attain the highest degree of petrification possible in this attitude, when I saw between me and my target, at the very end of my musket, the

gentle, peaceful figure of my good friend Michel, the stone cutter.

—Thou art just in time, mon ami, said I to him, and thou wilt do me a great service if thou canst, without its being noticed, place for a moment thy cane under my bayonet: my arms will feel much better, and thy cane will feel none the worse.

—Ah! Mathurin, mon ami, said he to me, thou art well punished for having left Montreuil; thou hast no longer the religious counsel of the good curé; he no longer reads to thee; and thou hast forgotten entirely that music which thou didst love so much; that of the parade is certainly not worth the music thou didst know.

—C'est égal, said I, lifting the end of the barrel of my musket, from the support of his cane, in pride; c'est égal. Each one has his own idea.

—Thou wilt no longer cultivate the rows of trees and the beautiful peaches of Montreuil with thy Pierrette, who is as fresh as they are, and whose cheeks are also covered with the soft down.

—C'est égal, said I again, I have my idea.

—Thou must spend a long time on one knee, firing at nothing, with that empty flint-lock musket, before becoming even A CORPORAL.

—C'est égal, said I again, though I may advance slowly, it is true that I shall always advance; everything comes to him who knows how to wait, as they say; and, when I become a sergeant, I shall be something; and I shall marry Pierrette. UN SERGEANT C'EST UN SEIGNEUR, ET À TOUT SEIGNEUR TOUT HONNEUR.

Michel sighed.

—Ah! Mathurin! Mathurin! said he, thou art not wise; thou hast too much pride, too much ambition, mon ami; wouldst thou not rather have a substitute, if some one would pay for one for thee; and come, now, and marry thy little Pierrette?

—Michel! Michel! said I to him, thou hast gone the way of the world and thou hast become greatly depraved; I do not know what thou art doing now, but thou no longer hast the air to

me of a good mason, since instead of a vest thou hast on a coat of silk; but thou couldst not have said that to me at the time when thou wast always repeating: “Il faut faire son sort soi-même.” [One must be the architect of one's own fortune.]

—Moi! I do not wish to marry her with the money of others; and I am working out my destiny, as thou seest. —And, besides, it is the Queen who has put this into my head; and the Queen cannot be mistaken in judging what is best for me to do. She has said her very self: He shall be a soldier, and I shall marry them; she did not say: He shall return after having been a soldier.

—But, said Michel, if it should happen that the Queen herself would wish to give thee what thou needest for thy marriage, wouldst thou take it?

—No, Michel, I would not take her money, and it is impossible for her to wish to give it to me.

—And if Pierrette should herself, earn her dower? replied he.

—Yes, Michel, I would marry her at once, said I.

Ce bon garçon appeared to be greatly touched.

—Eh bien! replied he, I shall say that to the Queen.

—Art thou crazy, said I; or hast thou become one of her hired servants?

—Neither the one nor the other, Mathurin, although I no longer cut stone.

—What dost thou cut then? said I.

—Héh! I carve on paper with pen and ink.

—Bah! said I; is that possible?

—Oui, mon enfant, I am making very simple little plays; and, very easy to understand.—I SHALL HAVE THEE SEE ALL I AM DOING.

In fact, said Timoléon, interrupting the Adjutant, the works of the good Sedaine are not built upon difficult questions; one finds in them no synthesis on the finite and the infinite, upon final causes, the association of ideas and personal identity; in them one kills no kings or queens by

poison or the scaffold; they are called simply l'Agneau perdu, le Deserteur; or, it may be, le Jardinier et son Seigneur; they are very simple folk, who speak the truth; without knowing it, they are philosophers; like Sedaine himself, whom I find to be a much greater man than he is generally understood to be.

I made no reply.

The adjutant continued:

—Eh bien, tant mieux! said I, I shall be as pleased to see thee working at that as I used to be to see thee working stone.

—Ah! but what I used to build is worth more than what I am constructing now. That cannot pass out of fashion; that will remain standing much longer. But, in falling, that could hurt someone; whereas, when that which I now build shall fall, no one will be crushed by it.

—C'est égal! I am always pleased with you, said I - - -

That is to say I would have said it, had not a

terrible blow from the butt-end (crosse) of the corporal's musket, sent the cane of my old friend Michel flying, clear over there, almost to the powder magazine.

At the same time he ordered under arrest, for six days, the sentry who had permitted a citizen to enter.

Sedaine comprehended well enough it was time to be going ; so he quietly picked up his cane and left by the Forest Gate, calling back to me :

—I ASSURE THEE, MATHURIN, THAT I SHALL TELL ALL THIS TO THE QUEEN.

THE TRIANON

CHAPTER NINTH

A SITTING

My Little Pierrette was a beautiful little girl, with a decided character, calm and honest. She was not very easily disconcerted, and since she had spoken to the Queen, she could not very easily be taught anything; she even said to Monsieur le Curé and his nurse, that it was her wish to marry Mathurin; and she would get up in the night to work at her trousseau, just as though I had not been turned out of doors for a long time, if not for all my life.

One day (it was Easter Monday, she always remembered it, poor Pierrette, and often told me

of it), that day, as she was seated before the door of Monsieur le Curé, stitching away and singing, not in the least concerned about anything, she saw quickly arrive, so suddenly, a beautiful coach with six horses, trotting down the avenue at a marvellous rate, mounted by two little postilions, in powder and rose, very pretty, and so little that, in a distance, one could notice only their great riding boots. They had, also, great bouquets at the breast and in the hair, just over one ear. And what should happen! but the écuyer, in advance of the horses, stopped precisely in front of the door of Monsieur le Curé; where, also, the carriage had the kindness to stop; and they opened wide the carriage door. There was no one inside. As Pierrette was looking with wide-open eyes, the écuyer took off his chapeau politely and begged her to be pleased to enter the carriage.

You may imagine, perhaps, that Pierrette made some ado? Not at all; she had too much good sense for that. She simply took off her two wooden shoes, leaving them on the

door-step, and went in doors; folded up neatly her work, put on her shoes with silver buckles, and entered the coach, assisted by the footman, as if she had been accustomed to it all her life; because, since she had changed robes with the Queen, she no longer doubted anything.

She has often told me that she feared two things, while in that coach: at first, she was frightened because they drove so fast that the trees along the Avenue Montreuil appeared to be chasing after each other, as though they had gone mad; next, she noticed the beautiful white cushions of the carriage, and she was afraid the blue and yellow colors of her petticoat might stain them; so she raised her skirt and remained standing just touching the edge of the cushions. Nothing else tormented her during her adventure, for she divined well that, under such circumstances, it is best to do what is wished of one, frankly and without hesitation.

In accordance with so just a sentiment as to her position, which was natural to a disposition

so happy, gentle and inclined to the good and true in everything, she was perfectly content to have the écuyer offer her his arm and to be conducted to the Trianon, and into its gilded apartments ; only, she was careful to walk on the tips of her toes, out of regard for the beautiful wood parquetry, of citron and of woods from India, lest she might mar the polished surface with the nails of her shoes.

When she was entering the last chamber, she heard a little joyous laugh and two, very sweet voices, which made her just a little timid for her heart beat rapidly ; but, on entering, she felt re-assured, at once ; it was the laugh of her friend, the Queen.

Madame de Lamballe was with her, but seated within the embrasure of a window ; seated before a desk for miniature painting : on the green cloth of the desk, an ivory all prepared ; near the ivory, small camel's hair brushes ; near the brushes, a glass of clear water.

—Ah ! la voilà, said the Queen with an air of

gladness; and she ran to her to grasp both of her hands.

—How fresh she is! How pretty! What a pretty little model she will make for you! Do not miss it, Madame de Lamballe! Place thyself there, mon enfant.

And the beautiful Marie Antoinette forced her to sit down in a chair so huge that her little feet hung swinging, resting upon nothing; and Pierrette was speechless.

—Only see how well she holds herself, continued the Queen; she does not have to be told twice what one wishes; I wager you she has spirit. Hold thyself right, mon enfant; and listen thou to me. Two gentlemen are coming here. Whether thou dost know them or not, it matters nothing, and that does not concern thee. Thou wilt do whatever they ask thee to do. I know that thou canst sing; thou wilt sing. When they tell thee to enter and to go out, to go and to come, thou wilt enter, thou wilt go out, thou wilt go, thou wilt come, very exactly;

dost thou understand? All this is for thy good. Madame and I, we will aid thee to learn something that I know very well; and, for what we do for thee, we ask only that thou pose every day, one hour, before madame; that is not too hard for thee, n'est-ce pas? Cela ne t'afflige pas trop fort?

Pierrette could only reply by turning red and pale at each word; but she was so happy that she could have kissed the Queen as her comrade.

As she was posing, her eyes turned towards the door, she saw enter two men; the one short and fat, the other tall. As she saw the taller one, she could not keep from crying out:

—Why! It is - - -

But she bit her finger, to keep from speaking.

—Eh bien! what do you think of her, gentlemen? said the Queen; am I mistaken?

—N'est-ce pas que c'est la Rose même? said Sedaine.

—A single note, Madame, said the fleshier of the two, and I shall know if it is a ROSE to

Monsigny, as she is to Sedaine.

—Let us see, my little one, repeat this scale,
said Grétry, singing ut, ré, mi, fa, sol.

Pierrette repeated it.

—THAT VOICE IS DIVINE, MADAME, said he.

The Queen clapped her hands and danced for
joy.

—She shall earn her dower,* said she.

Note : The French marriage dower, or *dot*, comes from the higher, ancient civilization of the south of France. It is the marriage portion with which it is purposed to found a family ; that is, it is for the benefit of the succeeding generation ; and, therefore, neither the husband nor the wife has power over it ; nor can the consent of both destroy it ; only the income from the *dot* can be expended.

ORLEANS

CHAPTER TENTH *V*

UNE BELLE SOIRÉE

Here the honest Adjutant sipped some absinthe from his little glass, touching ours in doing so; and, after wiping his white moustache with his red handkerchief, which he twisted for a moment in his great fingers, he continued thus:

—If I knew how to arrange surprises, mon lieutenant, as it is done in books; to keep back the end and purpose of a story, as though holding high the sugar-plum beyond the reach of my auditors; then, allowing it to touch their lips; then, raising it again; then, giving it all, to be swallowed at a gulp; I would tell you all this

differently. But I can only thread my needle simply as I lived my life from day to day; and I must tell you, how, from the day that my poor Michel came to see me here, at Vincennes, and found me in the position of one firing in the first rank, I began to grow thin in a most ridiculous manner, because I heard nothing from our family at Montreuil, and I began to think that Pierrette, even, had forgotten me entirely. The regiment Auvergne was ordered to Orleans; there, for three months, I was so home-sick, that I looked yellow, and could no longer carry my musket. My comrades began to despise me; as we do all sickness, as you know.

Besides those who held me in disdain because they thought me very ill, there were others who believed that I was merely shirking; and, in the last case, there was nothing for me to do but to die, in order to prove that I spoke the truth. But not being ill enough to go to bed, nor strong enough to rally, I was in a most unfortunate position.

One day an officer of my company came to find me, and said to me:

—Mathurin, thou who knowest how to read, come read a little what I show thee.

And he led me to the Square of Jeanne-d'Arc, a square that is ever dear to me; there, I read on a great poster a notice of the theatre, printed thus:

“BY ORDER :

“Monday next an extraordinary representation of IRÈNE, a new play by M. DE VOLTAIRE ; also, by M. SEDAINE, ROSE ET COLAS, music by M. DE MONSIGNY ; for the benefit of Mademoiselle Colombe, celebrated singer of the Comédie-Italienne, who will appear in the second piece. SA MAJESTÉ LA REINE has deigned to promise that she will do honor to the spectacle by her presence.”

—Eh bien, said I, mon capitaine, what have I to do with that ?

—Thou art a good fellow, said he to me, thou

art handsome; I shall have thee powdered and curled, to give thee a little better air, and thou shalt be placed, as sentry, at the door to the Queen's box.

What was said was done. The hour for the play came; behold me in the full uniform of the regiment of Auvergne, standing on a blue carpet, in the midst of garlands and festoons of flowers, that they had placed everywhere; and, on each step of the stairway of the theatre, stood, in full bloom, a lily.

The director was running in every direction, with a joyous air and very agitated. He was a small man, very fat and very red; his coat was of silk, and blue as the sky; and he displayed a most flourishing shirt frill, as he strutted about. Everything excited him; and, without ceasing, he would go to the window to see what was going on outside, saying:

—This is the livery of Madame la Duchesse de Montmorency; this, the running footman of Monsieur le Duc de Lauzun; now, Monsieur de

Lambesc is coming. Do you see? Oh! but the Queen is good! Vous savez? Vous savez? The Queen is good!

He passed me and repassed me, wild; seeking Grétry; and, nose to nose, they encountered each other in the corridor, precisely in front of me.

—Tell me, Monsieur Grétry, mon cher Monsieur Grétry, tell me, I beg of you, is it not possible for me to speak to this celebrated singer you are bringing to me? Certainly it will not be permitted an ignorant, unlettered person like myself to raise the slightest doubt as to her talent; but—still I would like to know, from you, if it is not to be feared that the Queen may not be satisfied. There has been no rehearsal!

—Héh! Héh! replied Grétry, I can assure you that you shall not see her. An actress like that one, Monsieur, is a spoilt child. But you shall see her when she enters upon the scene. Besides, should it be some other than Mademoiselle Colombe, what have you to do with that.

—How Sir! I, the Director of the Theatre

of Orleans, I have not the right - - - he began, puffing out his cheeks.

—No right, my brave director, said Grétry. How is it that you doubt for a moment talent for which Sedaine and I are responsible? And he said this very seriously.

I was surprised and greatly pleased to hear the name of Sedaine cited with authority ; and I paid more attention.

The director, a man who knew all the tricks of his trade, wished to gain all the profit that he could under the circumstances.

—But am I counted then as nothing? said he ; have I the appearance of being nothing at all in this theatre? I have made my theatre ready with infinite pleasure, only too happy to see the august princess who - - -

—A propos, said Grétry, do you know I am charged to announce to you that this evening the Queen will have remitted to you a sum equal to half the gross receipts.

The director saluted with a profound bow, stepping backwards with surprise ; which only

showed, more plainly, how much pleasure this good news had given him.

—Oh! no! Monsieur, no! I was not speaking of that; although, with respect, I receive this favor; but you have given me no hope of seeing
- - - -

—You should know also, that you are spoken of as the director for the Comédie-Italienne at Paris.

—Ah! Monsieur Grétry - - - -

—All speak well of You, at Court; this is why the Queen has come to see your theatre:—The DIRECTOR inspires everyone; from Him comes the genius of the author, the genius of the composer, the power of the actor, the success of the designers, the decorators, the managers of the lights; the very sweepers, He has His eyes upon; He is the beginning and the end of it all; AND THE QUEEN KNOWS ALL THIS.

—You have tripled the price of seats, of course.

—More than that, Monsieur Grétry; not one

can be had for less than a louis. I could not be so wanting in respect for the Court to place the prices lower.

At that moment the sound of many horses' feet was heard and great cheers of joy. The Queen entered so quickly, that I and the sentry opposite to me, had scarcely time to present our arms. Handsome nobles followed her, and the air was filled with perfume. There came also the young woman whom I recognized as the one who accompanied her at Montreuil.

The play began at once. Le Kain and five other actors from the Comédie-Francaise had come to play the tragedie of *Irene*, and I perceived that this tragedy was being allowed to run its course, for the Queen was talking and laughing all the time it lasted. Out of respect for her, no one applauded; which is the usage still, I believe, at Court. But when the opera came, she no longer spoke, and no one breathed a whisper in her box.

All at once I heard the grand voice of a woman rise from the scene.* It pierced me

Note: "La Skena."

through and through ; I began to tremble, and I was forced to lean upon my musket for support. THERE IS BUT ONE VOICE LIKE THAT IN ALL THE WORLD ; THE VOICE THAT COMES FROM THE HEART, THE VOICE OF PASSION ; RESOUNDING, LIKE A HARP, WITHIN THE CHEST.

I listened, holding my ear near the door ; and, through the gauze curtain of the little round window of the box, I saw the comedians and the piece they were playing.

There was in it a little person who sang :

Il était un oiseau gris
Comme un' souris,
Qui, pour loger ses petits,
Fit un p'tit
Nid.

And she was saying to her lover, repeatedly :

Aimez-moi, aimez-moi, mon p'tit roi.

And, as he was seated in the window, she feared some one might see Colas ; and she sang this refrain in her song :

Ah ! r'montez vos jambes, car on les voit.

I felt an extraordinary, chilly sensation over my whole body when I saw how closely that Rose resembled Pierrette ; she was the same height, she wore the same clothes ; her red and blue frock, but with a white petticoat ; and she had the same naïf and deliberate air ; and her little feet, with silver buckled shoes and red and blue stockings.

—Mon Dieu ! I said to myself, how skillful these actresses must be to take thus, all at once, the appearance of others ! See that famous Mademoiselle Colombe, who lives in a beautiful hotel, who came here by post, who has many lackeys, and who goes about Paris dressed like a duchess, and she can make herself resemble, that much, Pierrette ! But one can see very well, all the same, that it is not her. My poor little Pierrette

could not sing that well, although her voice was just as beautiful.

Nevertheless I could not cease watching her ; and I stood with my face glued to the glass, until the moment the door was pushed open in my very face. The Queen was too warm, and wished her box open. I could hear her voice ; she spoke clear and quick :

—I am well pleased ; the King will be greatly amused with our adventure. Monsieur le Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre may say to Mademoiselle Colombe that she shall not repent having let me do this honor to her name.

—Oh ! But it amuses me !

—Ma chère Princesse, said she to Madame de Lamballe, we have entrapped everybody here - - - And every one here is doing a good deed, they need have no doubt of that. See how the good people of Orleans are enchanted with the great singer I have brought to them ; and all the Court is longing to applaud her.

—Oui ! oui ! applaudissons !

At the same time she gave the signal to applaud; and all the house, the hands free, now, no longer will allow a single word of Rose to pass without applauding to the skies. The charming Queen was enraptured.

—It is here, in Orleans, said she to Monsieur de Biron, that I find three thousand lovers; but it is THE ROSE they love; and not me that they applaud, this time.

The play ended and the ladies were throwing their bouquets to Rose.

—And the true lover, where is he? said the Queen to Monsieur le Duc de Lauzun.

He came from the box, making a sign to my captain, who was roaming about the corridor.

A great trembling seized hold of me; I felt that something was about to happen, that I could not comprehend and dare not foresee, or even think about it.

My captain saluted profoundly and spoke in a low tone to M. de Lauzun. The Queen was looking straight at me; I leaned back against the wall to keep from falling. - - - Someone was

coming up the stairway; and I saw Michel Se-daine, followed by Grétry and the director, so important and so impertinent; Michel was leading Pierrette, the true Pierrette, *ma Pierrette à moi*, my sister, my spouse, *ma Pierrette de Montreuil*.

The director called out in the distance:

—Voici une belle soirée! Eighteen thousand francs!

The Queen again turned; and, speaking in a voice to be heard outside her box; as, with an air at the same time full of joyous frankness and the most refined kindness, she took the hand of Pierrette:

—Come, *mon enfant*, said she; in no other way couldst thy dower be earned in one short hour of time and without sin. Tomorrow, I shall lead back my pupil to Monsieur le Curé de Montreuil, who will absolve us, both, I hope. He will surely pardon thee for having played in comedy

this one time, only, in thy life; it is the least of the sins an honest woman can commit.

Then she saluted me.

Saluted me, more than half dead as I was!

—I hope, said she, that Monsieur Mathurin will be willing to accept the fortune of Pierrette; I add nothing to it; she has earned it herself.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

Tx

END OF THE HISTORY OF THE ADJUTANT

Here the good Adjutant arose to take from the wall the portrait which he had us once more pass from hand to hand.

—This is how she looked, said he; in the same costume, this headdress and the handkerchief around her neck. See how beautifully Madame la Princesse de Lamballe had the kindness to paint her. It is thy mother, mon enfant, said he to the beautiful young girl he drew near to him and seated on his knee; *she played no more in comedy; but she remembered what was taught her by the Queen.*

He was greatly affected. His white moustache was trembling and a tear rolled down upon it, as he said:

—This one child killed her mother, being born; I must love greatly to pardon that; but everything is not given us at one time. That would be too much, apparently,—for me,—since Providence has willed it otherwise. I have rolled along since then, with the cannon of the Republic and of the Empire, and can say that, from Marengo to Moscow, I have seen some glorious days; but I have had no day more beautiful in my life than the one which I have told you here. The day that I re-entered the Garde Royale was also one of my happy days. I took again with joy the white cockade that I had worn in the Royal-Auvergne!

Also, mon lieutenant, I continue on duty, as you have seen; and I believe that I would die of shame, if, tomorrow at inspection, a single cartridge should be missing; and I believe they took a keg of powder, at the last firing exercise, to make cartridges for the infantry.

I have almost a desire to go see, if it were not forbidden to enter with a light.

We begged him to remain contentedly with his children, and to take his rest ; and they tried to turn his thoughts. As he finished his little glass, he told us some incidents of his life of little importance ; also, how he had never advanced to higher grades, because he had always loved so much the élite corps, and always felt an attachment for his regiment. A gunner in the Garde of the Consuls, a sergeant in the Garde Imperiale, had always appeared to him to be higher grades than to be an officer in the line. I have seen others like him. Every honor that a soldier could receive, he had : a musket of honor, with silver bands ; pensioned crosses of honor ; and, above all, beautiful and noble records of service, marked with the column of brilliant deeds. Of these he did not speak to us.

It was two o'clock in the morning, when we rose and shook cordially the hand of this brave man, and we left him happy with the emotions

of his early life which his good and honest spirit had revived.

—How often, said I, these old soldiers, with their quiet resignation, are worth more than we ourselves,—though young officers,—with our foolish ambitions !

□ That gave us something to think about.

—Yes, I believe, continued I, as we crossed the little drawbridge and it was raised behind us ; I believe that what is purest in our day, is the spirit found in such a soldier ; scrupulous in regard to his honor and believing it stained if the least spot of negligence or lack of discipline be noticed ; without ambition, without vanity, without luxury, always a slave and always proud and content with his Servitude ; *possessed of nothing dear in life but a souvenir of Gratitude.*

—And believing that Providence has her eyes upon him ! said Timoléon ; with the air of one profoundly impressed ; and he left me to retire to his own room.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER TWELFTH

THE AWAKENING

For one hour I had been sleeping ; it was four in the morning ; it was the 17th of August ; I shall not forget it. All at once my two windows flew open at the same time ; and all their glass fell, breaking, into my chamber. It made a little silvery sound, very pretty, as I heard it. I opened my eyes, just as a white smoke entered, very slowly ; forming a thousand crowns, it came towards me as I lay in bed. I began to consider it, with some surprise, when I recognized it quickly by its color and the odor : I ran to the window. Daylight was commenc-

ing with tender colors to dawn, lighting with its rays all that old chateau so immobile and silent, still seemingly in a stupor from the first and unexpected blow received. I saw nothing stirring. Only the old grenadier placed on the rampart, and shut out there, barred from the castle, (as usual,) was walking very quickly, his musket on his arm, and looking down into the court-yards. He was like a lion caged.

But all continued silent, and I commenced to believe that some firing was going on in the castle moats, causing some commotion; when another explosion, more violent, was heard. I saw rising at the same time a sun which was not that in the distant heavens, for it rose near the last tower on the forest side of the castle. Its rays were red, and, at the extremity of each one of them, there was a shell bursting and befogging itself with a cloud of powder smoke.

This time the donjon, the barracks, the towers, the ramparts, the villages, and the very forest trembled and appeared to move from the left to the right and back again, like a drawer

suddenly opened and instantly closed again. I understood at that moment that the earth was quaking.

A clicking like that which would be made if all the porcelain at Sèvres were to be thrown out the windows, made me comprehend perfectly that of all the beautiful stained glass in the chapel windows, of all the quarries of glass in the windows of the chateau and of all the window panes in the barracks and the town, there remained not a piece of glass held either by the lead or by the putty.

The little crowns of white smoke disappeared.

—It is good powder that makes crowns like those, said Timoléon, who, dressed and armed, had entered my room.

—It seems to be that we are blowing up, said I.

—I have nothing to say to the contrary, coolly replied Timoléon.

During the three minutes that he watched, in

silence, the silent castle, I, also, dressed and armed myself.

All at once, twenty drums began to beat the general call; the walls came out of their impassible stupor and called to us for help. The arms of the drawbridge began to lower, slowly descending with their heavy chains, until the bridge had touched the outer edge of moat; this was to allow the officers to enter, and the mass within, to leave. We ran to the portcullis: it rose to receive the strong and to cast forth the weak.

We encountered a singular sight; all the women were crowding towards the gateway, also, all the horses of the garrison. From a just instinct of danger, they had broken their halters, overthrown their grooms, and escaped from the stables, and, prancing and with stamping hoofs, they were neighing for the unwall'd fields outside. They ran about the court yards, through the crowds of women, their manes erect, their eyeballs and their nostrils red, snorting with terror in the midst of the panic, scraping

against the walls, thrusting their burnt noses in the sand, and breathing with horror the smoke of the powder.

A young and beautiful woman wrapped in her bed clothes and followed by her mother, half dressed, was carried by a soldier; the first to leave the citadel; and all the crowd thronged after them.

I recall how, at that moment, this appeared to me a very useless precaution; the land was not safe within six leagues of there.

We entered, running; as did, also, all the officers rooming in town. Within, the first thing that struck me was the calm countenances of our old grenadiers of the Garde, posted on duty at the entrance. With their arms resting beside their feet, and leaning on the muzzles of their muskets, they were looking towards the magazines, with the eyes of connoisseurs; but without uttering a word; without changing, in the least, their prescribed attitude.

My friend Ernest d'Hanache was in command

of them; he saluted with the smile of Henry IV which was so natural to him; I touched his hand. He lost his life in the last Vendée; and he died nobly. All of whom I speak in this short souvenir, although it all occurred, now, less than twenty years ago, are dead.

As I ran, my foot struck something, and I almost stumbled to the ground: I paused to look at it, for it was a human foot, blown from the body.

—See what your own foot will look like, very soon, said to me an officer in passing on within, laughing heartily.

Nothing indicated that this foot had ever worn a shoe. It looked as though it had been embalmed and preserved after the manner of the mummies; broken a couple of inches above the ankle joint, like the feet of statues from which we study in the ateliers; polished, veined, seemingly of black marble; having nothing red about it but the toe-nails. I had no time to sketch it, then:

I continued my course to the inmost court, in front of the quarters.

There, our companies were waiting for us. In their first surprise, they had believed the castle was attacked, and had sprung from their cots to the racks for their arms; and had formed at once in the court, most of them with nothing on except their shirts; but musket in hand. Many feet were bleeding, cut by the broken glass.

They were silent, motionless, awaiting an enemy who was not man. We could notice the joy with which they saw their officers arrive.

As to ourselves, we knew that we had rushed to the very crater of a volcano. It was still smoking, and a third explosion imminent.

All the windows were blown out of the little tower, the smaller magazine; and, from its open flanks, the smoke was slowly rising, in a spiral form. I watched it circling upward.

All the powder in the tower, had it exploded? Were there in it larger quantities, that the fire

would reach? That was the question. But there was another not so uncertain; which was that all the caissons of the light artillery were charged with cartridges and standing in the adjoining open court; might not a spark start an explosion there; and, should the donjon be reached, there were four hundred thousand charges there and for the larger cannon; Vincennes, its forests, its village and the farms around, the faubourg Saint-Antoine itself, would all be blown up together; masonry, trees, earth and roofs; and human heads, no matter how strongly attached they might be to one's shoulders.

Discipline can find no better auxiliary than Danger. When all are exposed, each one becomes silent and is ready to cling to the first man who gives an order or sets an example.

The first to start for the caissons was Timoléon. The serious and self-contained air on his face never abandoned him; but, with an agility that surprised me, he rushed to a wheel already taking fire. Lacking water, he put it out with

his clothes, his hands, he pressed his very breast against it. We thought him at first lost; aiding him, we found the fire soon smothered about the blackened wheel; but Timoléon's clothes were burned, and his left hand was black; but, otherwise, his person was intact and he was as tranquil as ever. In a moment all the caissons were withdrawn from the dangerous court and outside the fortress, in the plain of the polygon. Each gunner, each soldier, each officer took hold, dragging, rolling and pushing these redoubtable chariots, using the hands, the feet, the shoulders and the very forehead.

The pumps inundated the little magazine, through the black opening in front; it began to crack, each side; balanced twice, forward and backward; then, opened its flanks, like the bark of a great tree, and fell outward, uncovering a sort of black oven, full of smoke and steam, through which nothing could be recognized; arms, projectiles, all that remained, was a heap of dust, red and grey; from which, like lava, came the boiling water; a lava of blood and iron

that the fire had mixed into a living mortar, which came pouring forth into the court-yard, scorching the grass in its passage.

The danger was at an end ; it remained to reconnoitre and see what could be found.

—It could be heard in Paris, said Timoléon, and he grasped my hand ; I must go write to her and reassure her. There is nothing further to do here.

He said nothing more to anyone ; but returned to our little home, with green blinds, as though he had returned from a hunt.

THE CASTLE

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

A CRAYON SKETCH

When the peril has passed, it is recognized; we find it great. One is astonished at his good luck; one turns pale with fear, when he has the time to think; he is surprised how strong he was, and how weak he has become. One feels a sort of terror on reflection, although it had not been a moment in one's thoughts whilst in the midst of action.

Like the lightning itself, powder can accomplish what is marvelous.

The explosion had accomplished miracles not merely by its force, but with address and cunning

skill. It appeared to have measured its strength and directed its blows. It had played with us; it had said to us —I will carry away that one, but not the one next to him. It had torn up from the ground an arcade of cut stone, and carried it to the fields, entire; there it lay in the grass, like a ruin, blackened by time. It had driven three bombs six feet into the ground, ground to powder the paving with bullets, broken short off a cannon of bronze, driven into every room the windows and doors, but carried to the roofs the blinds from the windows of the great magazine, without touching a grain of its powder. It had knocked over ten great boundary stones, like pawns in a game of chess; it had broken the chains connecting them, as one would a thread of silk, and had twisted the links like manila rope. It had plowed up the ground in the court with broken gun carriages, and incrustated the walls with the pyramids of balls; but, under the cannon nearest to the magazine that had exploded, it had left alive the little white hen, we had noticed the evening before. When this hen came peacefully

from her nest, with her little chicks, the cries of joy of our good soldiers greeted them as old comrades, and they began to pet them, like children.

She went about clucking and gathering together her little ones, wearing still her red plume and silver neck piece. She appeared to be waiting for her master from whose hand she fed; and, acting wild, she began to run between our legs, still followed by her little ones.

She had found something horrible.

At the foot of the chapel lay the head and breast of the poor Adjutant, without body and without arms. The foot I had touched with my foot, on entering, was his. The anxious old man had, without doubt, been unable to resist the desire to visit once more his barrels of powder, to count the shells in the early dawn; and, something in his movements, it may be the iron in his boot-heel, struck a spark enflaming all.

Like a stone from a sling, his head with his breast had been thrown sixty feet into the air, against the wall of the church; and the half burnt powder, with which his frightful bust was im-

pregnated, had engraved his face in durable form upon the wall, at the foot of which the head had fallen. All looked at it, but no one spoke. Perhaps each recognized the danger he had been in. The Surgeon-Major came and said: —He did not suffer.

But to me it seemed as though he suffered still; but, in spite of that, through an invincible curiosity, with the bravado of an officer, I sketched that head.

Such things are done in a society where one's sensibility is suppressed. One trains himself to harden the heart, he conceals his pity, fearing it resembles weakness; he makes an effort to dissimulate the divine sentiment of compassion, without thinking that when force imprisons a good sentiment, the prisoner may be smothered.

I recall that I felt myself, that very moment, to be very hateful. My young heart was swelling with chagrin, almost to bursting, at that death; but I continued obstinately, with tranquility to sketch; and it is that sketch, which I

preserve, that recalled to me the history I have written of the modest life of this brave man.

That noble head was no longer anything but an object of horror, a sort of Medusa; its color was that of black marble; the hair on end, the eyebrows raised toward the upper portion of the forehead, the eyes closed, the mouth open as though uttering a cry. One could see sculptured in that black bust the terror caused by flames suddenly bursting from the earth. One felt that he had had time to be seized by a terror fleetier than powder; and, perhaps, time for incalculable suffering.

—Did he have time to think of PROVIDENCE? said to me the peaceful voice of Timoléon d'Arc * * who, over my shoulder, was watching me sketch; he was looking at it through his glasses.

At the same time a light hearted soldier, fresh looking, florid and blond, stooped down to take, from that smoked breast, the black silk cravat:

—It is still all right, said he.

He was an honest lad of my own company,

named Muguet, who had TWO CHEVRONS on his arm, not a single scruple, neither was he melancholy; and, to the last, he proved himself one of the best sons in the world.

The tramp of many horses turned our attention. It was the King, Louis XVIII, coming in his hooded calèche to thank his Garde for having preserved his old soldiers and his old chateau.

He looked long at the strange lithograph on the chapel wall.

The troops had formed their line. He raised his voice, strong and clear, demanding of the Chief of Battalion what officers or what soldiers had distinguished themselves.

—All have done their duty, Sire! replied simply Monsieur de Fortanges, the most knightly and the most amiable officer that I have known; the man of the world who has given me the best idea of what must have been

the manners of le Duc de Lauzun and le Chevalier de Grammont.

Thereupon, instead of a cross of honor for Timoléon, the King drew from his calèche only rolls of gold, which he gave to be distributed among the soldiers; and, passing through the castle court, he passed out through the Forest Gate.

Ranks were broken, the explosion forgotten; no one thought of being discontented or believed himself more worthy of merit than another. And, in fact, it was a crew saving their vessel in order to save themselves, that was all. Nevertheless I have since seen less bravery more highly valued.

I thought of the family of the poor Adjutant. But the King did not think of that.

In general, when princes pass by anything, they pass it much too rapidly.

THE FAMILY

The "*Souvenirs*" of the gifted, enlightened Comte de Vigny, test governments by the true unit of all nations: LA PATRIA, THE FAMILY.

In the "Life of Capt. Renaud," towards whom an emperor had assumed the duties of a father, no family is founded; but the lesson is taught, in the very destruction of the seed of a Russian family, to regain possession of the royal cathedral city of Rheims.

In the story "Mathurin and Pierrette," the Wisdom of Egypt is recognized: like Charlemagne in the early days of the kingdom, a queen founds a family, even in the midst of an army.

In the history of poor “Laurette,” we behold the “scélérats” rulers of a republic—“five pieces of a king”—destroy a family; and that the family of a poet; making of the captain of a brig-of-war their butcher.

“TEL EST LE SIÈCLE” is truly a poem of this XIX century, the century of republics.

TRUE WARRIOR CASTLE LAW:

Purity

Truthfulness

Enlightenment

Contentment.

The centurion said,—LORD ! I am not worthy that under MY ROOF Thou shouldst enter ; but only speak Thou a word.

And hearing, Jesus marveled.

COURAGE—ÉCOUTEZ

L'ESPRIT PUR.

À Éva.

1863

I

Si l'orgueil prend ton cœur quand
le peuple me nomme,
Que de mes livres seuls te vienne ta
fierté.
J'ai mis sur le cimier doré du gentil-
homme
Une plume de fer qui n'est pas sans
beauté.
J'ai fait illustre un nom qu'on m'a
transmis sans gloire.
Qu'il soit ancien, qu'importe ? il n'au-
ra de mémoire
Que du jour seulement où mon front
l'a porté.

II

Dans le caveau des miens plongeant
mes pas nocturnes,
J'ai compté mes aïeux, suivant
leur vieille loi.
J'ouvris leurs parchemins, je fouillai
dans leurs urnes
Empreintes sur le flanc des sceaux
de chaque roi.
À peine une étincelle a relui dans
leur cendre.
C'est en vain que d'eux tous le sang
m'a fait descendre ;
Si j'écris leur histoire, ils descendront
de moi.

III

Ils furent opulents, seigneurs de vastes
terres,
Grands chasseurs devant Dieu, comme
Nemrod, jaloux
Des beaux cerfs qu'ils lançaient
des bois héréditaires

Jusqu'où voulait la mort les livrer
à leurs coups ;
Suivant leur forte meute à travers
deux provinces,
Coupant les chiens du roi, déroutant
ceux des princes,
Forçant les sangliers et détruisant
les loups ;

IV

Galants guerriers sur terre et sur
mer, se montrèrent
Gens d'honneur en tout temps comme en
tous lieux, cherchant
De la Chine au Pérou les Anglais,
qu'ils brûlèrent
Sur l'eau qu'ils écumaient du le-
vant au couchant ;
Puis, sur leur talon rouge, en quittant
les batailles,
Parfumés et blessés revenaient à Ver-
sailles
Jaser à l'Œil-de-bœuf avant de
voir leur champ.

V

Mais les champs de la Beauce avaient
leurs cœurs, leurs âmes,
Leurs soins. Ils les peuplaient d'in-
nombrables garçons,
De filles qu'ils donnaient aux chevaliers
pour femmes,
Dignes de suivre en tout l'exemple
et les leçons ;
Simples et satisfaits si chacun de
leur race
Apposait Saint Louis en croix
sur sa cuirasse,
Comme leurs vieux portraits qu'aux
murs noirs nous plaçons.

VI.

Mais aucun, au sortir d'une rude campagne,
Ne sut se recueillir, quitter le destrier,
Dételer pour un jour ses palefrois d'Espagne,
Ni des coursiers de chasse enlever l'étrier
Pour graver quelque page et dire en quelque livre

Comme son temps vivait et comment il sut vivre,
Dès qu'ils n'agissaient plus, se hâtant d'oublier.

VII.

Tous sont morts en laissant leur nom
sans auréole ;
Mais sur le disque d'or voila qu'il
est écrit,
Disant : " Ici passaient deux races
de la Gaule
Dont le dernier vivant monte au temple
et s'inscrit,
Non sur obscur amas des vieux noms
inutiles,
Des orgueilleux méchants et des riches
futiles,
Mais sur le pur tableau des livres de
l'ESPRIT."

VIII.

Ton règne est arrivé, PUR ESPRIT, roi
du monde !
Quand ton aile d'azur dans la nuit
nous surprit,

Déesse de nos mœurs, la guerre va-
gabonde
Régnaît sur nos aïeux. Aujourd'hui
c'est l'ÉCRIT,
L'ÉCRIT UNIVERSEL, parfois impèrissable,
QUE TU GRAVES AU MARBRE OU TRAÎNES
SUR LE SABLE,
Colombe au bec d'airain ! VISIBLE
SAINT-ESPRIT !

IX.

Seul et dernier anneau de deux chaînes
brisées,
Je reste. Et je soutiens encor dans
les hauteurs,
Parmi les maîtres purs de nos savants
musées,
L'IDÉAL du poète et des graves penseurs.
J'éprouve sa durée en vingt ans de
silence,
Et toujours, d'âge en âge encor, je vois
la France
Contempler mes tableaux et leur jeter
des fleurs.

X.

Jeune postérité e'un vivant qui vous
aime !

Mes traits dans vos regards ne sont pas
effacés ;

Je peux en ce miroir ME CONNAÎTRE MOI-
MÊME,

Juge toujours nouveau de nos travaux
passés !

Flots d'amis renaissants ! Puissent mes
destinées

Vous amener à moi, de dix en dix années,
Attentifs à mon œuvre, et pour moi c'est
assez !

LA BOUTEILLE À LA MER

CONSEIL À UN JEUNE HOMME INCONNU.

1853.

Courage, ô faible enfant de qui ma solitude
Reçoit ces chants plaintifs, sans nom, que vous
jetez

Sous mes yeux ombragés du camail de l'étude.
Oubliez les enfants par la mort arrêtés;
Oubliez Chatterton, Gilbert et Malfilâtre;
De l'œuvre d'avenir saintement idolâtre,
Enfin, oubliez l'homme en vous-même.—Écoutez:

Quand un grave marin voit que le vent l'emporte
Et que les mâts brisés pendent tous sur le pont,
Que dans son grand duel la mer est la plus forte
Et que par des calculs l'esprit en vain répond;
Que le courant l'écrase et le roule en sa course,
Qu'il est sans gouvernail et, partant, sans res-
source,

Il se croise les bras dans un calme profond.

Il voit les masses d'eau, les toise et les mesure,
Les méprise en sachant qu'il en est écrasé,
Soumet son âme au poids de la matière impure
Et se sent mort ainsi que son vaisseau rasé.
—À de certains moments, l'âme est sans résis-
tance;

Mais le penseur s'isole et n'attend d'assistance
QUE DE LA FORTE FOI DONT IL EST EMBRASÉ.

Dans les heures du soir, le jeune Capitaine
A fait ce qu'il a pu pour le salut des siens.
Nul vaisseau n'apparaît sur la vague lointaine,
La nuit tombe, et le brick court aux rocs indiens.
—Il se résigne, il prie; il se recueille, il pense
À celui qui soutient les pôles et balance
L'équateur hérissé des longs méridiens.

Son sacrifice est fait; mais il faut que la terre
Recueille du travail le pieux monument.
C'est le journal savant, le calcul solitaire,
Plus rare que la perle et que le diamant;
C'est la carte des flots faite dans la tempête,
La carte de l'écueil qui va briser sa tête:
Aux voyageurs futurs sublime testament.

Il écrit: "Aujourd'hui, le courant nous entraîne,
Désemparés, perdus, sur la Terre-de-Feu.

Le courant porte à l'est. Notre mort est certaine:

Il faut cingler au nord pour bien passer ce lieu.

—Ci-joint est mon journal, portant quelques
études

Dés constellations des hautes latitudes.

QU'IL ABORDE, SI C'EST LA VOLONTÉ DE DIEU!"

Puis immobile et froid, comme le cap des brumes
Qui sert de sentinelle au détroit Magellan,
Sombre comme ces rocs au front chargé d'écumes,*
Ces pics noirs dont chacun porte un deuil castillan,

Il ouvre une Bouteille et la choisit très-forte,
Tandis que son vaisseau que le courant emporte
Tourne en un cercle étroit comme un vol de milan

Il tient dans une main cette vieille compagne,
Ferme, de l'autre main, son flanc noir et terni.

Note: Les pics San-Diego, San-Ildefonso.

Le cachet porte encor le blason de Champagne,
De la mousse de Reims son col vert est jauni.
D'un regard, le marin en soi-même rappelle
Quel jour il assembla l'équipage autour d'elle,
Pour porter un grand toste au pavillon béni.

On avait mis en panne, et c'était grande fête ;
Chaque homme sur son mât tenait le verre en
main ;

Chacun à son signal se décourit la tête,
Et répondit d'en haut par un hurra soudain.
Le soleil souriant dorait les voiles blanches ;
L'air ému répétait ces voix mâles et franches,
CE NOBLE APPEL DE L'HOMME À SON PAYS
LOINTAIN.

Après le cri de tous, chacun rêve en silence.
Dans la mousse d'Aî luit l'éclair d'un bonheur ;
Tout au fond de son verre il aperçoit la France.
La France est pour chacun ce qu'y laissa son
cœur :

L'un y voit son vieux père assis au coin de l'âtre,
Comptant ses jours d'absence ; à la table du pâtre,
Il voit sa chaise vide à côté de sa sœur.

Un autre y voit Paris, où sa fille penchée
Marque avec les compas tous les souffles de l'air,
Ternit de pleurs la glace où l'aiguille est cachée,
Et cherche à ramener l'aimant avec le fer.
Un autre y voit Marseille. Une femme se lève,
Court au port et lui tend un mouchoir de la grève,
Et ne sent pas ses pieds enfoncés dans la mer.

O SUPERSTITION DES AMOURS INEFFABLES,
MURMURES DE NOS CŒURS QUI NOUS SEMBLEZ
DES VOIX,
POURQUOI NOUS APPARAÎTRE EN UN JOUR' TANT
DE FOIS ?

Où sont-ils à présent? où sont ces trois cents
braves?

Renversés par le vent dans les courants maudits,
Aux harpons indiens ils portent pour épaves
Leurs habits déchirés sur leurs corps refroidis.
Les savants officiers, la hache à la ceinture,
Ont péri les premiers en coupant la mâtûre :
Ainsi, de ces trois cents, il n'en reste que dix !

Le capitaine encor jette un regard au pô'e
Dont il vient d'explorer les détroits inconnus.

L'eau monte à ses genoux et frappe son épaule ;
Il peut lever au ciel l'un de ses deux bras nus.
Son navire est coulé, sa vie est révolue :
Il lance la Bouteille à la mer, et salue
Les jours de l'avenir qui pour lui sont venus.

Il sourit en songeant que ce fragile verre
Portera sa pensée et son nom jusqu'au port ;
Que d'une île inconnue il a grandit la terre ;
Qu'il marque un nouvel astre et le confie au sort ;
Que Dieu peut bien permettre à des eaux insen-
sées .

De perdre des vaisseaux, mais non pas des pen-
sées ;

Et qu'avec un flacon il a vaincu la mort.

Tout est dit. À présent, que Dieu lui soit en
aide !

Sur le brick englouti l'onde a pris son niveau.
Au large flot de l'est le flot de l'ouest succède,
Et la Bouteille y roule en son vaste berceau.
Seule dans l'Océan la frêle passagère
N'a pas pour se guider une Brise légère ;
Mais elle vient de l'Arche et porte le Rameau.

Les courants l'emportaient, les glaçons la retiennent

Et la couvrent des plis d'un épais manteau blanc.

Les noirs chevaux de mer la heurtent, puis reviennent

La flairer avec crainte, et passent en soufflant.
Elle attend que l'été, changeant ses destinées,
Vienne ouvrir le rempart des glaces obstinées,
Et vers la ligne ardente elle monte en roulant.

Un jour, tout était calme et la mer Pacifique,
Par ses vagues d'azur, d'or et de diamant,
Renvoyait ses spendeurs au soleil du tropique.
Un navire y passait majestueusement ;
Il a vu la Bouteille aux gens de mer sacrée :
Il couvre de signaux sa flamme diaprée,
Lance un canot en mer et s'arrête un moment.

Mais on entend au loin le canon des Corsaires ;
Le Négrier va fuir s'il peut prendre le vent.
Alerte ! et coulez bas ces sombres adversaires !
Noyez or et bourreaux du couchant au levant !
La Frégate reprend ses canots et les jette

En son sein, comme fait la sarigue inquiète,
Et par voile et vapeur vole et roule en avant.

Seule dans l'Océan, seule toujours ! —Perdue
Comme un point invisible en un mouvant désert,
L'aventurière passe errant dans l'étendue,
Et voit tel cap secret qui n'est pas découvert.
Tremblante voyageuse à flotter condamnée,
Elle sent sur son col vue depuis une année
L'algue et les goëmons lui font un manteau vert.

Un soir enfin, les vents qui soufflent des Florides
L'entraînent vers la France et ses bords pluvieux.
Un pêcheur accroupi sous des rochers arides
Tire dans ses filets le flacon précieux.
Il court, cherche un savant et lui montre sa
prise,
Et, sans l'oser ouvrir, demande qu'on lui dise
Quel est cet élixir noir et mystérieux.

Quel est cet élixir ? Pêcheur, c'est la science,
C'est l'élixir divin que boivent les esprits,
Trésor de la pensée et de l'expérience ;
Et, si tes lourds filets, ô pêcheur, avaient pris

L'or qui toujours serpente aux veines du
Mexique,
Les diamants de l'Inde et les perles d'Afrique,
Ton labeur de ce jour aurait eu moins de prix.

Regarde.—Quelle joie ardente et sérieuse !
Une gloire de plus luit dans la nation.
Le canon tout-puissant et la cloche pieuse
Font sur les toits tremblants bondir l'émotion.
Aux héros du savoir plus qu'a ceux des batailles
On va faire aujourd'hui de grandes
funérailles.

Lis ce mot sur les murs : " COMMÉMORATION ! "

Souvenir éternel ! gloire à la découverte
Dans l'homme ou la nature égaux en profondeur,
Dans le Juste et le Bien, source à peine entr'
ouverte,
Dans l'Art inépuisable, abîme de splendeur !
QU'IMPORTE OUBLI, MORSURE, INJUSTICE INSENSÉE,
GLACES ET TOURBILLONS DE NOTRE TRAVERSÉE ?
SUR LA PIERRE DES MORTS CROÎT L'ARBRE DE
GRANDEUR.

Cet arbre est le plus beau de la terre promise,
C'est votre phare à tous, Penseurs laborieux !
Voguez sans jamais craindre ou les flots ou la
brise

Pour tout trésor scellé du cachet précieux.
L'OR PUR DOIT SURNAGER, ET SA GLOIRE EST
CERTAINE ;

DITES EN SOURIANT COMME CE CAPITAINE :
“ QU'IL ABORDE, SI C'EST LA VOLONTÉ DES
DIEUX ! ”

Le vrai Dieu, le Dieu fort est le Dieu des idées.
Sur nos fronts où le germe est jeté par le sort,
Répandons le Savoir en fécondes ondées ;
Puis, recueillant le fruit tel que de l'âme il sort,
TOUT EMPREINT DU PARFUM DES SAINTES
SOLITUDES,

JETONS L'ŒUVRE À LA MER, LA MER DES
MULTITUDES :

— Dieu la prendra du doigt pour la conduire au
port.

FANTAISIES OUBLIÉES

A MARIE DE CLÉRAMBAULT, AGÉE DE VINGT, JOURS.

LE BERCEAU.

Dors dans cette nacelle où te reçut le monde ;
Songe au ciel d'où tu viens, au fond de ton
berceau,
Comme le nautonier qui sur la mer profonde,
Rêve de la patrie et dort dans son vaisseau.

Le matelot n'entend au-dessus de sa tête
Qu'un bruit vague et sans fin sur le flot agité,
Et, quand autour de lui bouillonne la tempête,
Il sourit au repos qu'hélas ! il a quitté.

Qu'ainsi de notre terre aucun son ne t'éveille,
Et que les bruits lointains de la vaste cité,
La harpe de ton frère ou ta mère qui veille,
Tout forme à ton repos un murmure enchanté !

N'entends pas les vains bruits de la foule impor-
tune,
Mais ces concerts formés pour tes jeunes dou-
leurs ;

Tu connaîtras assez la voix de l'infortune :
Sur la terre, on entend moins de chants que de
pleurs.

Pour ta nef sans effroi la vie est sans orages ;
Le seul flot qui te berce est le bras maternel,
Et tes jours passeront sans crainte des naufrages
Depuis le sein natal jusqu'au port éternel.

Les nautoniers pieux sur la mer étrangère,
Invoquent la patronne et voguent rassuré - - -
Tu t'appelles Marie, ô jeune passagère,
Et ton nom virginal règne aux champs azurés.

LE RÊVE.

Ton rêve, heureux enfant, n'est pas un vain
mensonge ;
L'imagination n'est pas encore en toi ;
Elle tient de la terre, au lieu que ton beau songe
N'est qu'un moment d'absence où Dieu t'appelle
à soi.

Les anges sont venus près de ta jeune oreille
Et t'ont dit : " Oh ! pourquoi nous as-tu donc
laissés ?

À notre éternité la tienne était pareille,
Tes yeux vers les mortels ne s'étaient point
baissés.

" Tu touchais avec nous la harpe parfumée,
Et l'or de la cymbale et le sistre argentin ;
Tu flottais avec nous dans la sainte fumée
Qui tourne autour des feux de l'éternel matin.

" Tu soutenais le bras de la céleste Vierge
Lorsque l'enfant de Dieu l'accablait de son poids,
Ou bien tu te mêlais à la flamme d'un cierge
Devant l'Agneau sans tache et le livre des Lois.

" Au char d'Emmanuel tes ailes attelées
Guidaient la roue ardente et son essieu vivant ;
Et, pour nourrir le feu des lampes étoilées,
Aux voûtes de cristal on t'envoyait souvent.

" Des tabernacles d'or les secrètes enceintes
Étaient les lieux cachés choisis pour ton repos ;
Tu te posais aussi sur les genoux des saintes,
Écoutant leur cantique et leurs pieux propos.

“ Tu seras bien longtemps sans revoir nos mer-
veilles.

Ange ami, tes instants seront tous agités.

Tu pleures à présent sitôt que tu t'éveilles - - -

Depuis vingt jours, pourquoi nous as-tu donc
quittés ? ”

Ainsi, pour t'éloigner d'une vie éphémère,

Les anges t'ont parlé, discours plaintif et doux.

Tu leur as répondu : “ Vous n'avez pas de
mère ! - - - - ”

Et tous ont vu la tienne avec des yeux jaloux.

13 décembre 1822.

WASHINGTON

Henri II et Louis XII
Ont de beaux monuments,
Dans l'église,
A Saint-Denis.

(L'Art a fait la gloire des sculpteurs
Plus que la leur.)

Et vous, WASHINGTON, vous n'avez
Qu' un tertre de gazon.

Soyons assez grands
Pour que notre tombe,
Sans Art,
Soit honorée ;
Et, si ce n'est qu'une pierre,
Blanche ou noire,
Que le monde y vienne,
Comme à la Mecque,
En pèlerinage ;
ET Y POSE SES DEUX GENOUX.

SALVE REGINA

TOUT HOMME A VU LE MUR QUI BORNE SON
ESPRIT.

Du corps et non de l'âme accusons l'indigence.
Des organes mauvais servent l'intelligence
Et touchent, en tordant et tourmentant leur
nœud,
Ce qu'ils peuvent atteindre et non ce qu'elle veut.
En traducteurs grossiers de quelque auteur
céleste
Ils parlent. Elle chante et désire le reste.
Et, pour vous faire ici quelque comparaison,
Regardez votre flûte, écoutez-en le son.
Est-ce bien celui-là que voulait faire entendre
La lèvre ? Était-il pas ou moins rude ou moins
tendre ?
Eh bien, c'est au bois lourd que sont tous les
défauts ;

Votre souffle était juste et votre chant est faux ;
Pour moi, qui ne sait rien et vais du doute au
rêve,
Je crois qu'après la mort, quand l'union s'achève,
L'âme retrouve alors la vue et la clarté,
Et que, jugeant son œuvre avec sérénité,
Comprenant sans obstacle et s'expliquant sans
peine,
Comme ses sœurs du ciel elle est puissante et
reine ;
Se mesure au vrai poids ; connaît visiblement
Que son souffle était faux par le faux instrument ;
N'était ni glorieux ni vil, n'étant pas libre ;
Que le corps seulement empêchait l'équilibre ;
Et, calme, elle reprend, dans l'idéal bonheur,
LA SAINTE ÉGALITÉ DES ESPRITS DU SEIGNEUR.

ALFRED VICTOR DE VIGNY

“J’avais le sentiment, cher et paternel ami,
qu’en publiant ces notes si éloquentes, j’arrachais
à la tombe quelque chose de ton génie ; et,
mieux encore, je faisais revenir (comme l’ombre)
DE TA BELLE AME ! Je le savais bien, ô noble
poète ! que tu paraîtrais plus grand à ceux qui
approcheraient de toi.” L. R.

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O FILS DE CADMUS ! -

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